

MJ: There are scratching noises, but, you know what I mean --so if somebody keeps....

AS: You see these things on TV, fastened to people.

MJ: Alright I'm going to see how you sound. They're close to people's faces without being intrusive and people sorta forget that they're there, which I think is a good thing.

AS: Yeah.

MJ: It sounds like you've done this before.

AS: Not exactly.

MJ: Haven't ya?

AS: I have been interviewed a few times.(laughter)

MJ: Have ya?

AS: Yeah.

MJ: By Historical Society people?

AS: No.

MJ: By the newspapers?

AS: Yeah.

MJ: Oh, OK. Well let me put something on the front of this Alice. Today is the...

AS: 28th.

MJ: 28th of May 1991. My name is Mark Junge and I'm talking with Alice Shoemaker here in her living room at the CM Ranch, East of Duboise just South of Highway 287. Right? Am I right so far?

AS. UmHum.

MJ: OK. Alice I thought today what we would do if it's OK with you is just talk a little bit about your life and some of the things you've done and maybe a little bit about the CM Ranch and Charlie Moore. It is Charlie Moore who started the ranch appl, Les was... Les and I bought the ranch and were just partners in the operation and then when Leslie married Pete...

MJ: This is your daughter now?

AS: Yeah.

MJ: OK.

AS: And that man whose picture's up there.

MJ: Um hum.

AS: They were very interested in joining us in the operation of the ranch so we incorporated. So we could give them stock...You can't just give the North 40 to somebody, you know when it's an operating business.

MJ: Sure.

AS: We gave them stock through the years and when they were divorced and Pete stayed, we increased his holdings and Les was the president and Pete was the vice-president and I was the secretary of the corporation; also ran the office and did the secretarial work for the ranch. And then when Les died, Pete became the president I became the vice-president and my daughter Barbara became the secretary. She also has stock in the corporation.

MJ: Now when you say Pete, you mean who?

AS: I mean Errol Petersen.

MJ: Errol?

AS: Errol - E R R O L L (spelled it out)

MJ: OK. And he is now.... Now how is he related to you?

AS: Well, he is my ex-son-in-law.

MJ: Right, this is what we just talked about before we went on tape.

AS: (Laughter)

MJ: OK, I guess what I like to ask people Alice if you don't mind, is some basic questions such as where and when you were born. What date?

AS: May 12, I mean May 20th, 1912.

MJ: So you just had a birthday here.

AS: Yes, I'm going on 80.

MJ: Where were you born?

AS: Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

MJ: Is that right?

AS: And I won a ski race where I was five years old.

MJ: When you were five?

AS: On the main street of Steamboat. During the winter carnival.

MJ: Were you raised in Steamboat?

AS: 'Till I was ten years old. And then we moved to Grand Junction where I finished school.

MJ: Who were your parents?

AS: Gladys and Ray Peck.

MJ: Any relation to the Pecks out of Riverton?

AS: No. No relation at all.

MJ: I see.

AS: Their parents were pioneers in Colorado. My mother's family homesteaded in Routt County and my Dad's mother was the County Superintendent of Schools for about 40 years in Routt County and that was when Routt County included Moffett County so it was a great big hunk of country.

MJ: Including part of North Park.

AS: Yeah. Uh huh.

MJ: Yeah. That's beautiful country up there.

AS: Actually my great, great, great grandfather established what is called the Peck House on Berthoud Pass near Empire.

MJ: Oh really? Now what is the Peck House.

AS: It's a hotel.

MJ: Oh, OK.

AS: He went there when they had the gold strikes and the silver strikes at Cripple Creek, in that area, and he decided he could make more money bedding and feeding miners going through than he could mining, so he established a hotel.

MJ: The smart ones usually do that.

AS: But it's still there.

MJ: Is it?

AS: It was bought by a couple of women and briefly was changed to the Hotels Gondead. But then it changed hands again and went right back to being the old famous Peck House.

MJ: I might mention that the noise in the background here is.....

AS: Oh will that bother...

MJ: No, No, I don't think...you need to have that.

AS: No, I'll tell ya, as long as I'm sittin still I don't have to have it. Just step over there and push that button on the right.

MJ: OK. What is this machine by the way?

AS: It's...It brings oxygen out of the air. And when it thumps it's releasing nitrogen.

NJ: Is that what it is?

AS: Yeah. (Laughter)

MJ: OK. Now what...can you explain for posterity at least what was your problem?

Your health problem.

AS: You mean now?

MJ: Yeah, um hum.

AS: Well, I had two hip replacements because I wore out my hip joints and I have artificial hips and in connection with that surgery, I developed clots, blood clots, that eventually in the last year or so have traveled to my lungs. And I went to several doctors before it was properly diagnosed and properly treated but now it's being treated and I'm getting well.

MJ: Good for you.

AS: The thing I have to do at 4:30 this afternoon is go to my aqua exercise class. I've got a tank I set on the edge of the pool and I do aqua exercises.

MJ: Where at?

AS: In a heated pool in town, the Circle F.

MJ: Oh, I see. Do you like it?

AS: It's very good for me and I like it.

MJ: It's a good exercise.

AS: Yeah it really is. For old joints, you know you can do that stuff to get in shape without damaging your joints and tendons like jogging and other things.

MJ: How are those hips working for you?

AS: Very well. The worn out hips, where the bones were scraping together were truly painful. It made it very difficult to walk around the ranch even. And now they don't hurt.

MJ: It's a miracle, isn't it?

AS: It is. I would be in a wheel chair right now or dead if that operation weren't available.

MJ: Well you don't need to worry about doing this again do you?

AS: (Laughter) No, I don't. I got 'em both done.

MJ: At the same time?

AS: No, one in August and one in December.

MJ: I wonder why they couldn't do them both at the same time?

AS: I guess it would be too big a shock to your system. And besides you need one to kinda get along for a while. (Laughter)

MJ: Let's go back a little bit. Could you tell me a little bit about life growing up in Northern Colorado? Around Steamboat and.....

AS: Well, I didn't. You see I grew up in Greeley and matured in Grand Junction. And Grand Junction is on the desert, almost right on the Utah border and is a fairly large .

MJ: I went to school in Gunnison, Colorado.

AS: Oh well, you know all about that part of Colorado.

MJ: Well not all about it, I know a little bit about it.

AS: I'm sorry, I seem to have a horse in my throat. (Laughter)

MJ: Oh no, you sound fine. Was your dad, when you were in Routt county at least, was your dad a rancher?

AS: No.

MJ: To begin with?

AS: My dad was the assistant supervisor of the Routt National Forrest when I was born. And when I was six years old he was transferred to Cody to be the supervisor of the Shoshoni National Forrest. That's the one here. We just spent the one summer in Cody, we moved all the furniture and the whole family and everything to Cody and in the Fall he sent him back to Steamboat to be the supervisor of the Routt. And this is back in 1918 and until that time my dad had never owned an automobile, so he, in a very misguided idea, bought a second-hand Model-T. They shipped the household goods by rail and he put mother and my brother and I in this Model-T with all our gear and we were going to tour through Yellowstone on our way back to Steamboat. (laughter) There were many adventures in connection with that second-hand Model-T.

MJ: Especially on those roads.

AS: Yes

MJ: In those days.

AS: The road around...I can still remember the road around the Buffalo Bill Reservoir. At that time it was just one narrow dugway (dirt), and if you met somebody, somebody had to back up to a turnout. You couldn't pass head on, and you can still see....in those days they didn't clean the reservoir before they flooded it, and you could look down off that road and see houses and trees and things down in the reservoir. I remember that as a six-year-old.

MJ: Marquette. The old town of Marquette was there.

AS: Yeah. I didn't know the town, but as a small child I remember seeing the houses and the trees down under the water.

MJ: Your dad then was a forest official very early in the history of the Forest Service.

AS: Yes he was. He was.

MJ: Was it a hard job?

AS: Well, yeah, It was a....they didn't have 50 people in the supervisor's office then, it was usually a supervisor and maybe a deputy who helped and maybe,...and most of the time a secretary. That was about it.

MJ: Did he have to be a Game Warden too?

AS: Well yes. He had some great adventures with an old warden down there named Doc Peterson who was one of the really tough ones. He'd lie out in the snow all night to catch somebody poaching or so.

MJ: Did he used to tell your husband stories?

AS: Tell my husband stories? Well, I guess so. My husband was partly responsible for having forest officers removed from the responsibility of being game wardens.

He felt that it put them in a very awkward position. As a matter of fact it came up here mostly. My husband was also a Forest Ranger. And that's how I met him.

MJ: Oh, did ya?

AS: His first ranger district was on the forest, on the Grande Mesa Forest where my dad was a supervisor.

MJ: How old were you when you met him?

AS: When I met Les? I was twenty-two.

MJ: Can you describe what took place?

AS: Yeah. (laughter) Is this all really history? (laughter)

MJ: Sure. Sure it is.

AS: Well, my dad....I had one brother fourteen months younger than I am and another eighteen years younger. But my dad raised the brother that was close to me exactly the same. I mean he took us both huntin, fishin; he taught us both to shoot; he taught us both to ride horses; he encouraged a lot of competition all the way from boxing to wrassling, shooting marbles and everything else. So I grew up a real tomboy. My mother was a very feminine, dressy, socializing woman but my dad raised me (laughter) the other way.

MJ: To be an outdoors person.

AS: Yeah. Well anyway, one of the great joys of my life was to be allowed to go places with Dad and I was working at the time, but a weekend came along and he said he had to go up to Cedaredge where there is a new ranger. He said "he isn't going to be there but I've gotta see some men about some things and you can go along if you want to." And I said "goody, goody" and we drove to

Cedaredge and stopped in the town. The ranger station was up at..at a lake on the mountain on Grand Mesa. I can't think of the name of the lake. Anyway, there was an office in Dubois, upstairs... I mean in Cedaredge, upstairs, kind of an office building. So Dad went up there and he came back down with a young man. I was waiting in the car while Dad went up to the office. He came down with a young man, and they came walking towards me and I took one look at him and I thought "that's the one for me." Just like that.

MJ: You were ready.

AS: I really was. (laughter) So we...he...it turned out that he was going up to the ranger station too, so we all went....it was Ward Lake, we all went up to the Ward Lake ranger station and Les and I cooked supper, washed dishes, and went for a walk in the moonlight and all that kinda thing and by that time we had both registered some..quite a little interest. My dad always went huntin with another man, another ranger on his forest. For years they had taken a week off and gone huntin every fall. I told Dad it wasn't gonna be that way that fall, he was gonna go huntin with Les so I could go. So we went on a horseback pack trip for a week huntin on the Grand Mesa and when we came back we were engaged.

MJ: Boy oh boy, you didn't know each other very long, didja?

AS: Yeah, we didn't get married....that was in October and we didn't get married until the next June.

MJ: Did he feel the same way?

AS: What?

MJ: Did Les feel the same way about you as you felt about him?

AS: No. I was so kind of overwhelmed, he told me afterwards he thought I was very arrogant when he met me, and probably I was being the boss's daughter. All I was was petrified. I was so anxious about him.

MJ: Un huh. (laughter) What was it about him that attracted you?

AS: Well, he was tall and dark and good looking and his eyes were warm and interested and he was an outdoorsman, a horseman.

MJ: Was he a good conversationalist?

AS: Oh yes, he was a marvelous conversationalist. He was a great public speaker.

MJ: You know it amazes me that, I guess it doesn't amaze me, it surprises me that we don't have the kind of conversationalists that we used to have in the old days.

AS: Well, everybody watches TV and everybody runs around like crazy all the time. We're always busy. And I think as people don't open up and visit with each other, they become a little bit reticent about revealing themselves to others.